

Commissioner's Message/Directional Statement

It has been the practice in the past for the Commissioner of the RCMP to produce an annual “Directional Statement” to communicate the organization’s priorities for the coming year.

I think it is important for everyone in the RCMP, including me as Commissioner, to take time to consider where we’ve been, where we are and where we need to be as we address the challenges we face. This message is intended to do this in a somewhat less formal manner than in previous years.

The past year has been one of major change for the RCMP and for me personally. The appointment of a public servant, who had worked closely with but never within the RCMP, was a surprise to many. I had much to learn about the RCMP, our mandate, our operations, our relationships with partners and stakeholders and about the men and women of this great organization who devote their lives to serving Canadians.

It has also been a challenge for the organization to learn how to respond to and support a Commissioner who brings different skills and experiences to the job. And the world certainly did not stop, or even slow down a little, to give us time to get to know one another or figure out how to move the organization forward while continuing to serve those who rely on us for their safety and protection.

The day I started my new job — in many ways my new life — as Commissioner, the government appointed the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP.

As I have often said, the RCMP’s response to, and support of, the Task Force are a credit to our organization and all those involved in that important work. The result was a Task Force report that emphasized the strengths and importance of the RCMP, identified a number of significant issues and made recommendations about how we and others could address those issues. We are now engaged in the serious and difficult challenge of doing exactly that.

Our vision for change is for the RCMP to be “an adaptive, accountable, trusted organization of fully engaged employees demonstrating outstanding leadership and providing world class police services.” Our work to further develop and implement significant and positive changes to achieve this will be an important priority over the coming year and beyond.

Based on input from across the RCMP and discussions with partners and stakeholders, we have been working on an RCMP Transformation Plan. Three priority areas to be addressed in the first phase of our work have been proposed: governance, leadership and capacity. A draft of the plan and further information about our objectives and proposed specific initiatives to meet them will be provided in the coming weeks. Progress on our transformation initiative will be the subject of an interim report by the RCMP Reform Implementation Council, appointed by the government to support our reform agenda and to report on our progress, which is expected in the near future.

Our work to build a stronger RCMP will not begin with the release of our draft Transformation Plan. Much has already been accomplished. Some examples include: reducing the average processing time for regular member applicants to four months, establishing a training allowance for cadets, creating a family resource web site, approving a national back-up policy, investing significantly in leadership development, improving the promotion process, restructuring National Headquarters and making significant changes to the senior leadership of the Force.

Further work will be undertaken to better define roles and responsibilities between National Headquarters and the field and to further simplify, streamline and support our management and operations. An important step will be the appointment of an Executive Director of Public Affairs whose responsibilities will include strategic communications and access to information. Our objective is to significantly increase the timeliness and effectiveness of our internal and external communications.

It has been an extraordinary year for the RCMP. A year of tremendous successes and a year that also included examples of failure and controversy. A year of great joy and unbearable loss. The tragic deaths and supreme sacrifices of Constables Christopher Worden and Douglas Scott remind us all of the frailty of human life, the dangers inherent in police work and the fundamental importance of the work we do. We must always remember.

Our first and foremost priority will continue to be to provide the best possible policing services to Canada and to Canadians. Our priorities of - reducing the threat and impact of organized crime and terrorism, preventing and reducing youth involvement in crime, contributing to safer and healthier Aboriginal communities, and contributing to Canada's economic integrity - remain our strategic operational focus for the coming year. The work we do to advance our vision for change will support these priorities. Our progress on all fronts will be measured and reported on

through the Balanced Scorecard.

There are other significant challenges and opportunities on the horizon. As we build on our progress to date on recruiting and as our numbers increase, we will be called upon to better align our resources and better focus our efforts to address significant challenges in federal, contract and Aboriginal policing. This will require the development and implementation of new and varied service-delivery alternatives. I anticipate that within the year we will, for example, establish a new Aboriginal police officer program, advance the Community Safety Officer and Community Program Officer pilot projects already underway, and enhance our capacity and effectiveness in areas of federal policing, including border security and national security.

We will also be engaged in a significant way in support of Public Safety Canada in the renegotiation of provincial, territorial and municipal contracts to cover the period 2012 to 2032. The contract renegotiation process and our engagement with contract partners more broadly will enable better long term planning and improvements in areas including governance, administrative and technical support, human resource management and learning and development.

Over the past year, I have travelled to every division and have met with employees, community leaders, partners and stakeholders across the country and from around the world. The more I have seen of the RCMP, the more impressed I have been.

I am impressed by the breadth and importance of our mandate. I am impressed by the strength of our relationships with the communities we serve and with other police and public safety partners. I am impressed with the diversity and depth of expertise within our organization. Most of all I am impressed by the women and men I have met who, day in and day out, work tirelessly to serve our country and their communities.

I am impressed by your hard work and by your dedication. I am impressed by your willingness to go the extra mile. I am impressed by your adaptability and your readiness to not only accept change, but to work to bring it about. I am impressed by your support for one another and your commitment to service.

It is an honour to be among you.

William J.S. Elliott
Commissioner